
CTRL + ALT + DELEGATE:

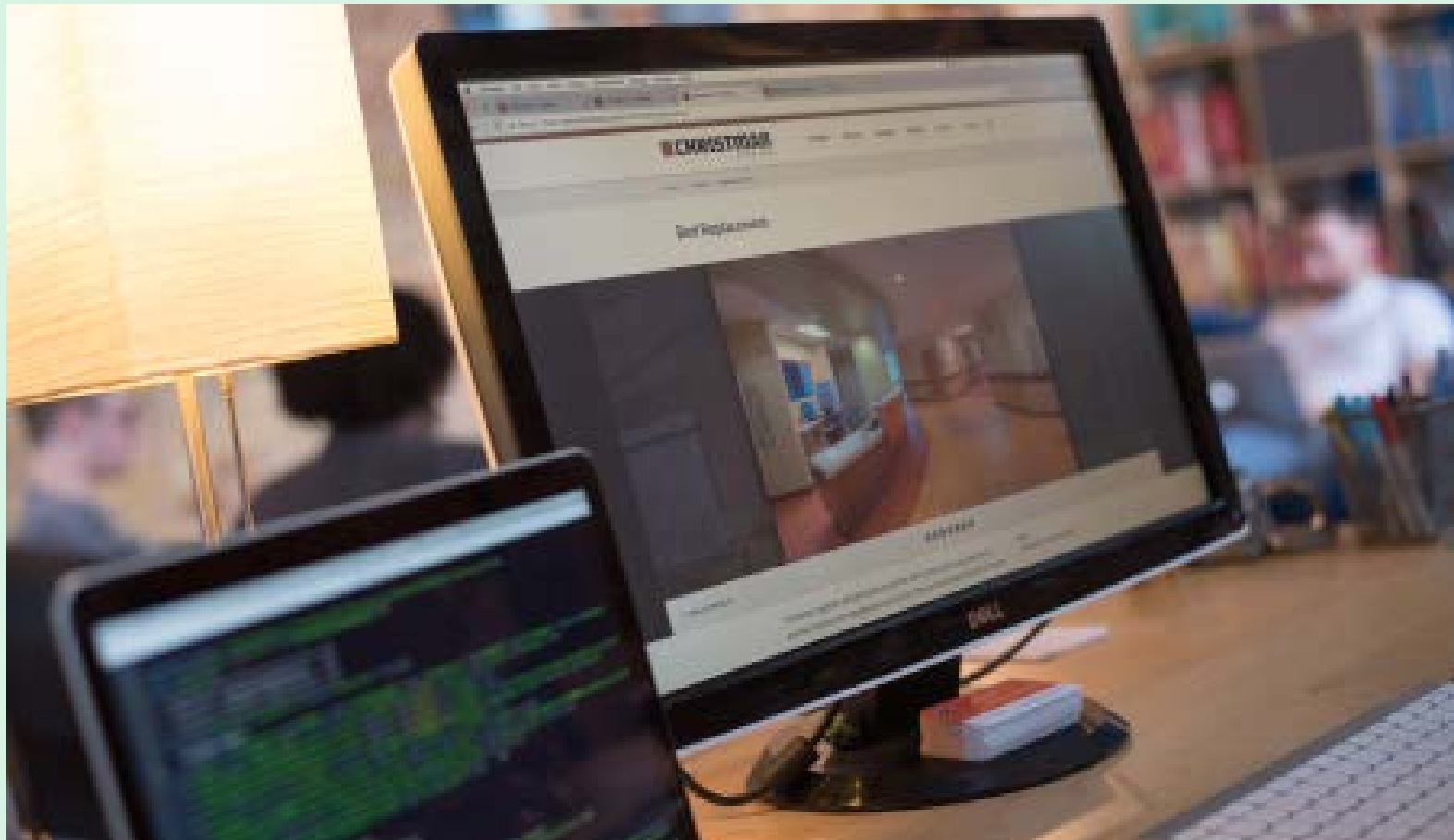
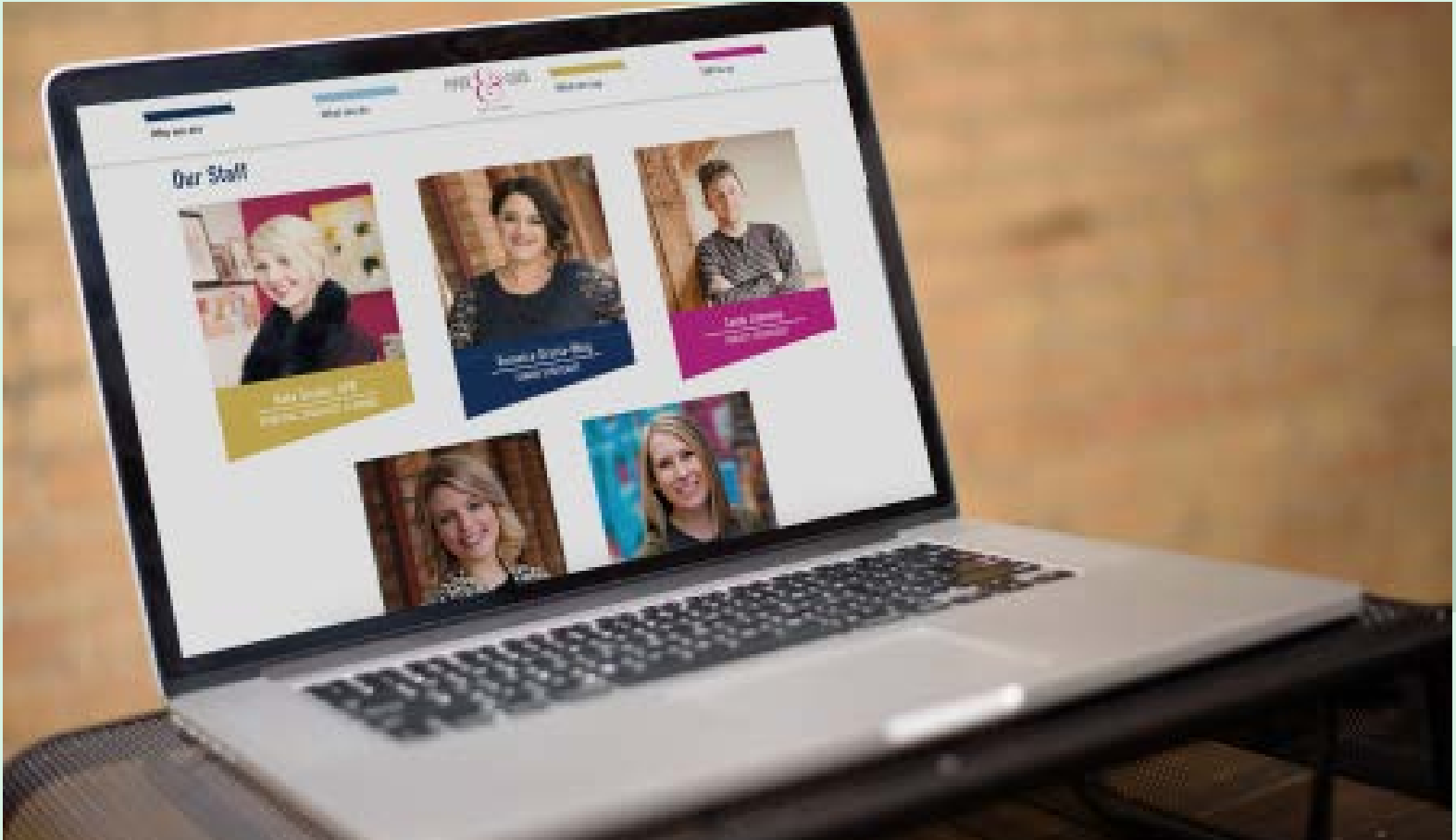
Keys to the shift from developer to manager

Kurt Trowbridge

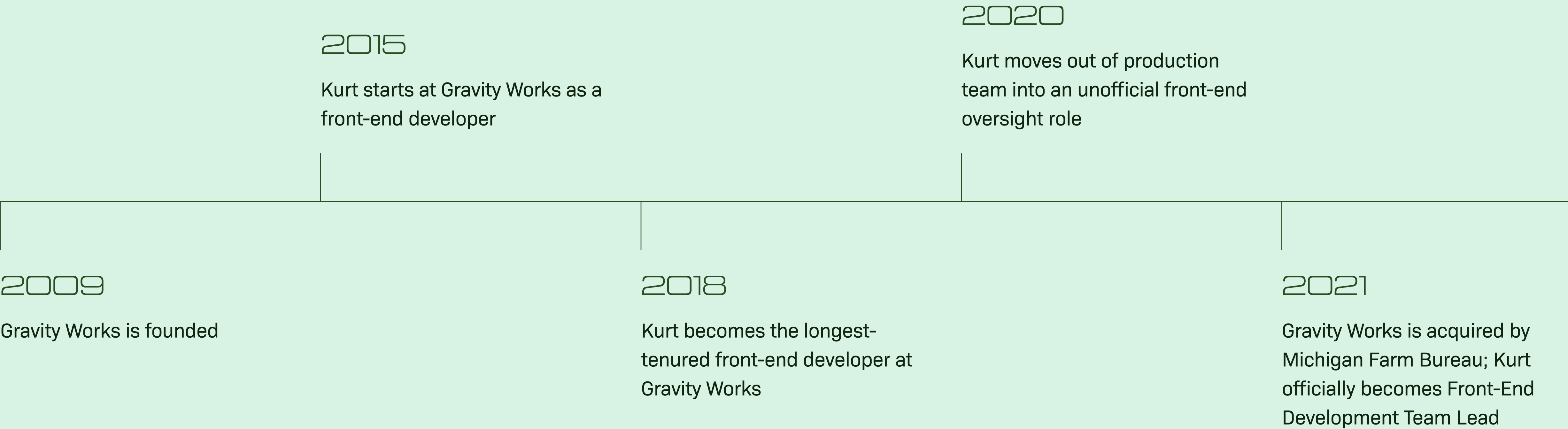
Front-End Development Team Leader
Gravity Works Design + Development

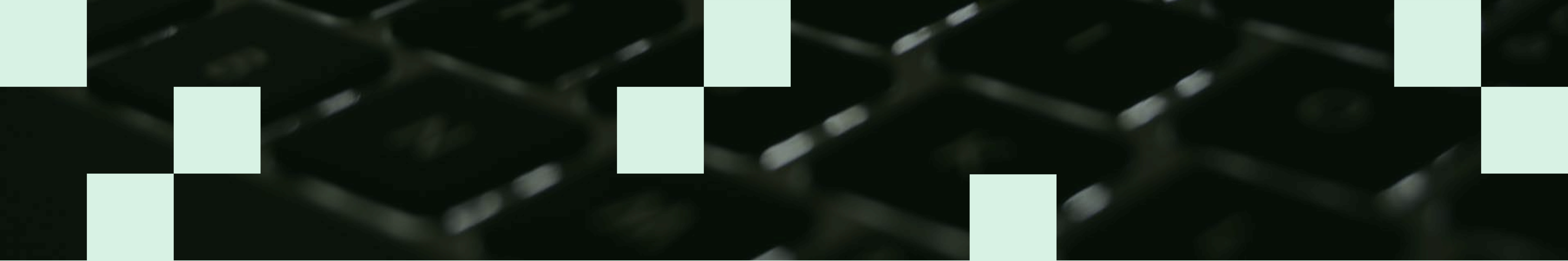






Timeline





01

ALT

How your skills shift when becoming a manager

02

DELEGATE / RETURN

Letting go of tasks while letting others learn and grow

03

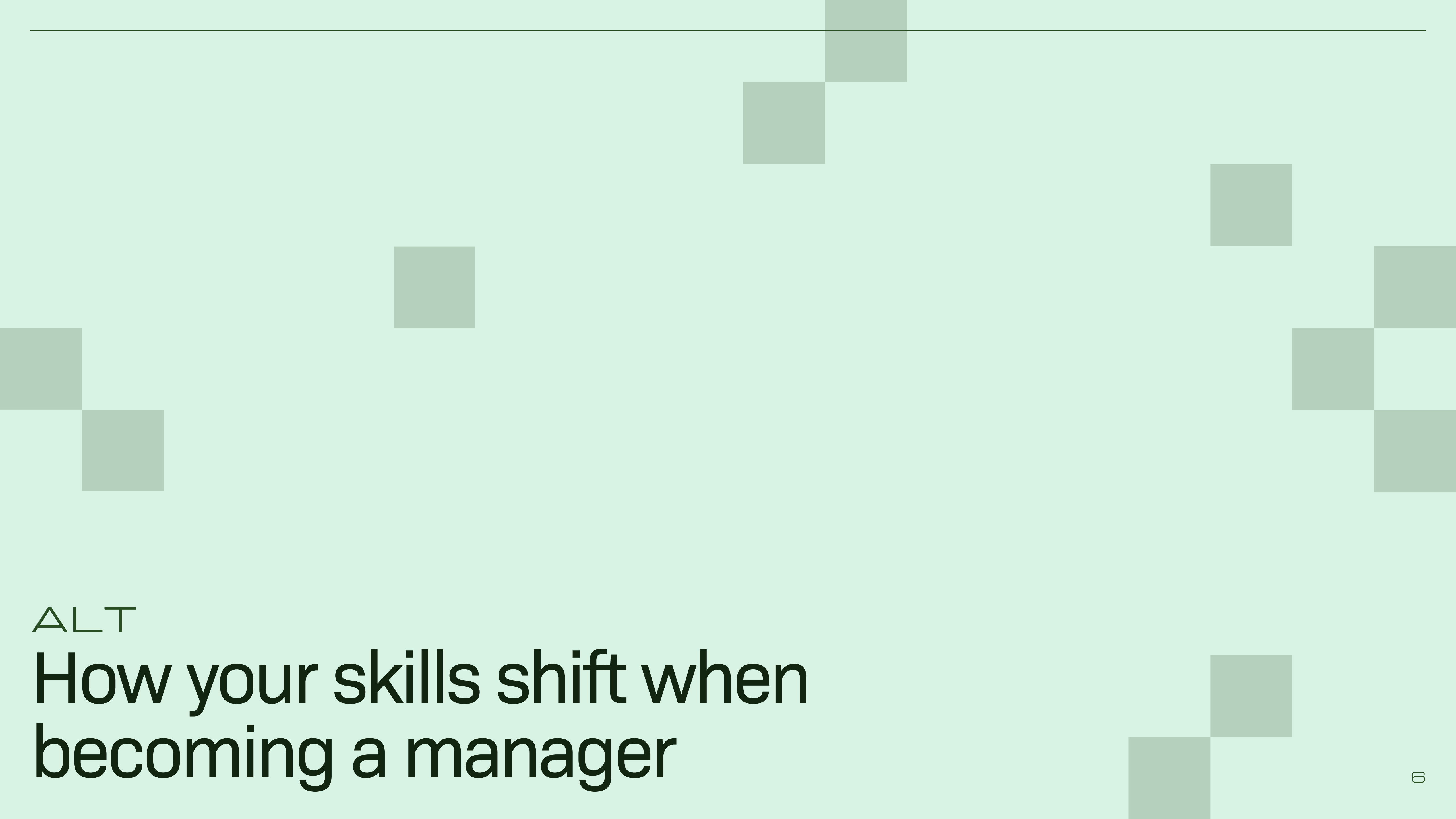
CTRL

Focusing on systems over tasks and processes over “hero” work

04

ESC

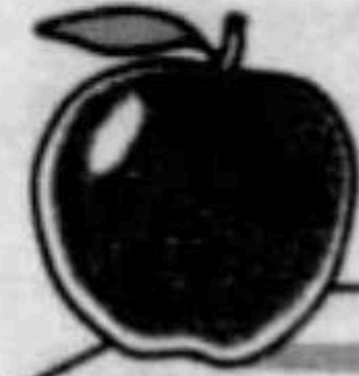
Taking care of yourself, so you can take care of your team

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ALT

How your skills shift when becoming a manager

“Kurt strives to do his best.”



CLASS ACT

Students are selected for Class Act by their schools.

Townsend Elementary School, Vandercook

Kurt Trowbridge

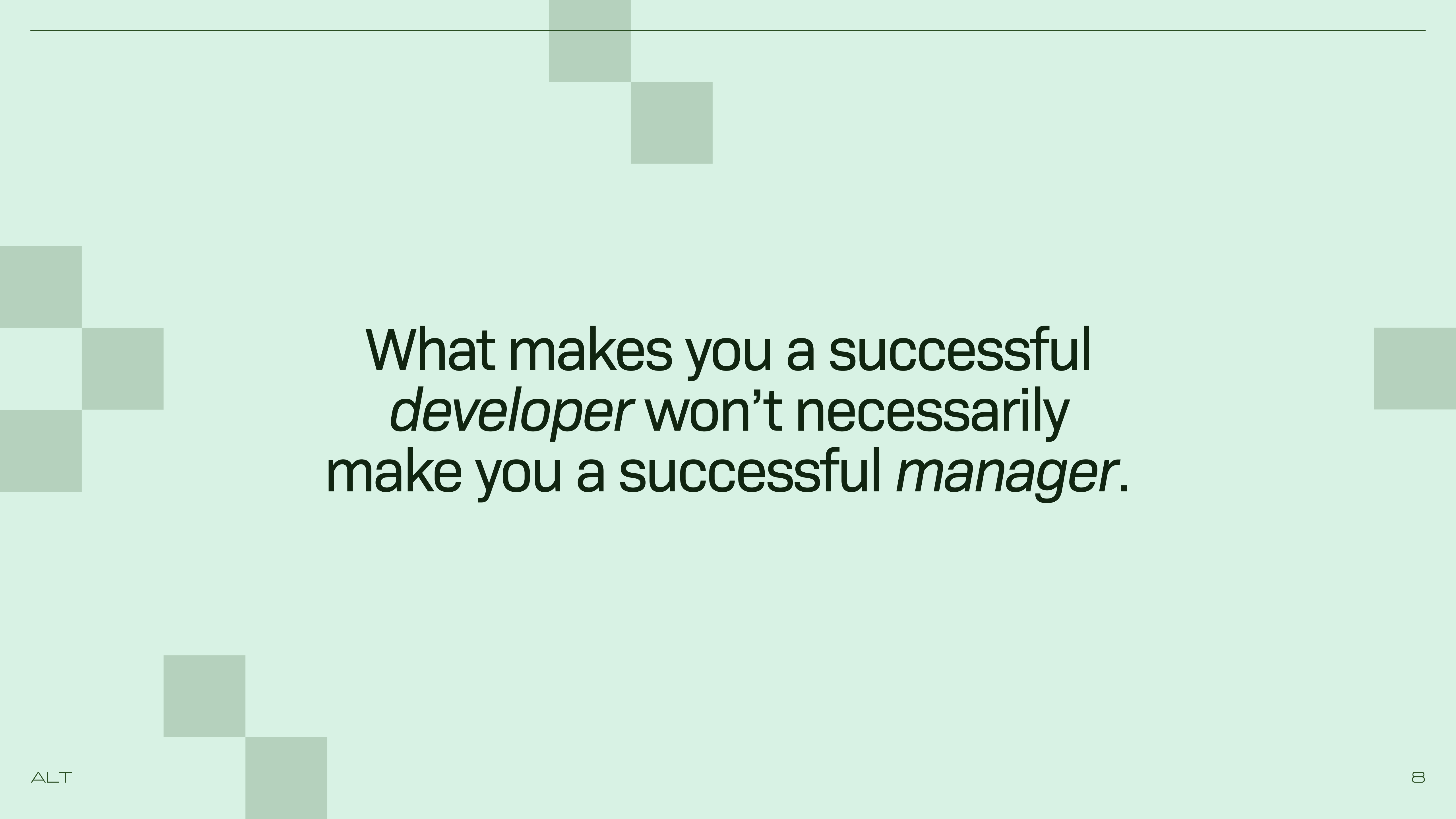


- 7, second-grader in Kathy Higgins class
- Son of Robert and Cathy Trowbridge of Vandercook

Enjoys kickball, computer games, Lego's and Cub Scouts

"Kurt strives to do his best. He is always cooperative and helpful."

—Kathy Higgins, teacher

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What makes you a successful
developer won't necessarily
make you a successful *manager*.

Tangibles & Intangibles

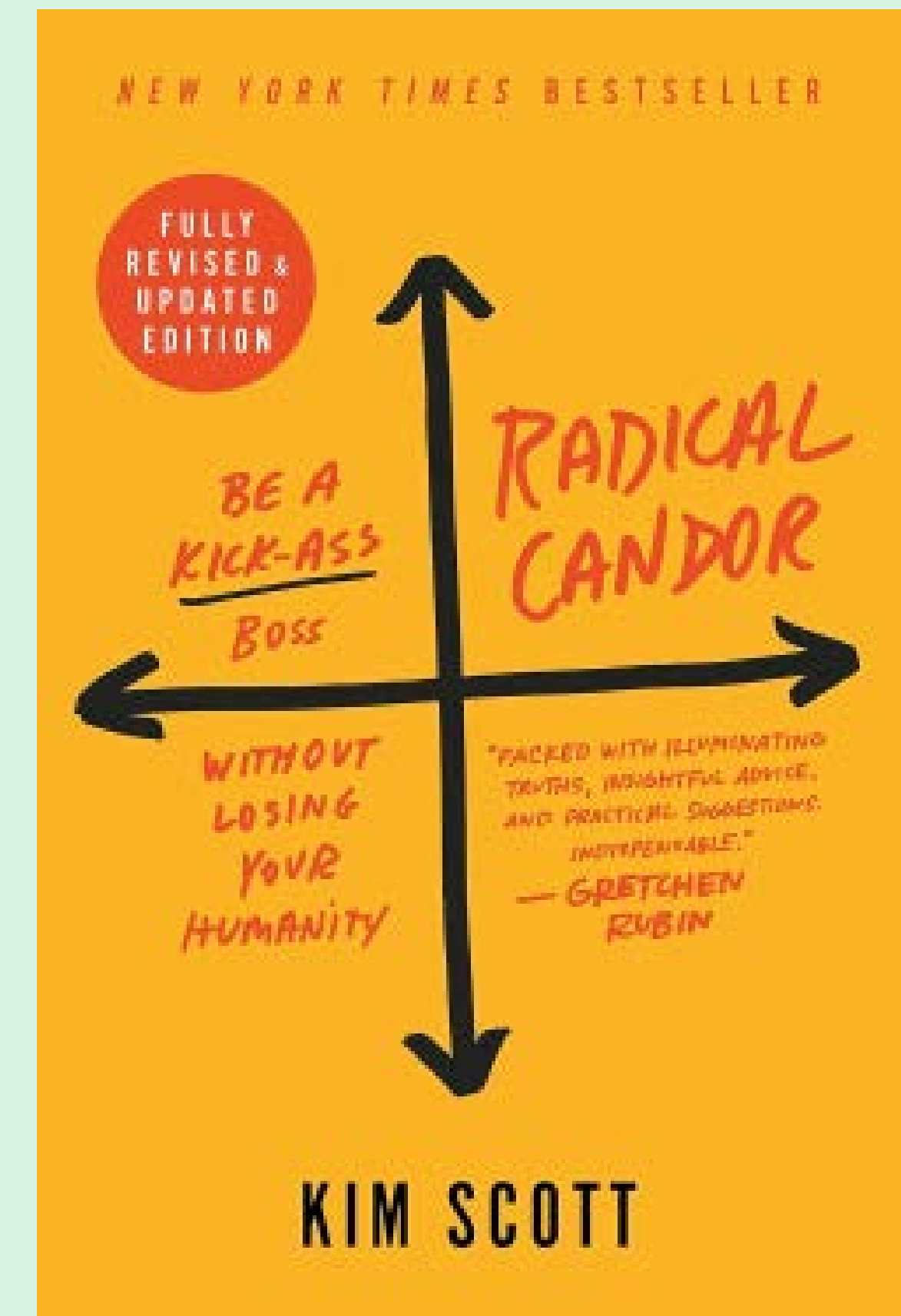
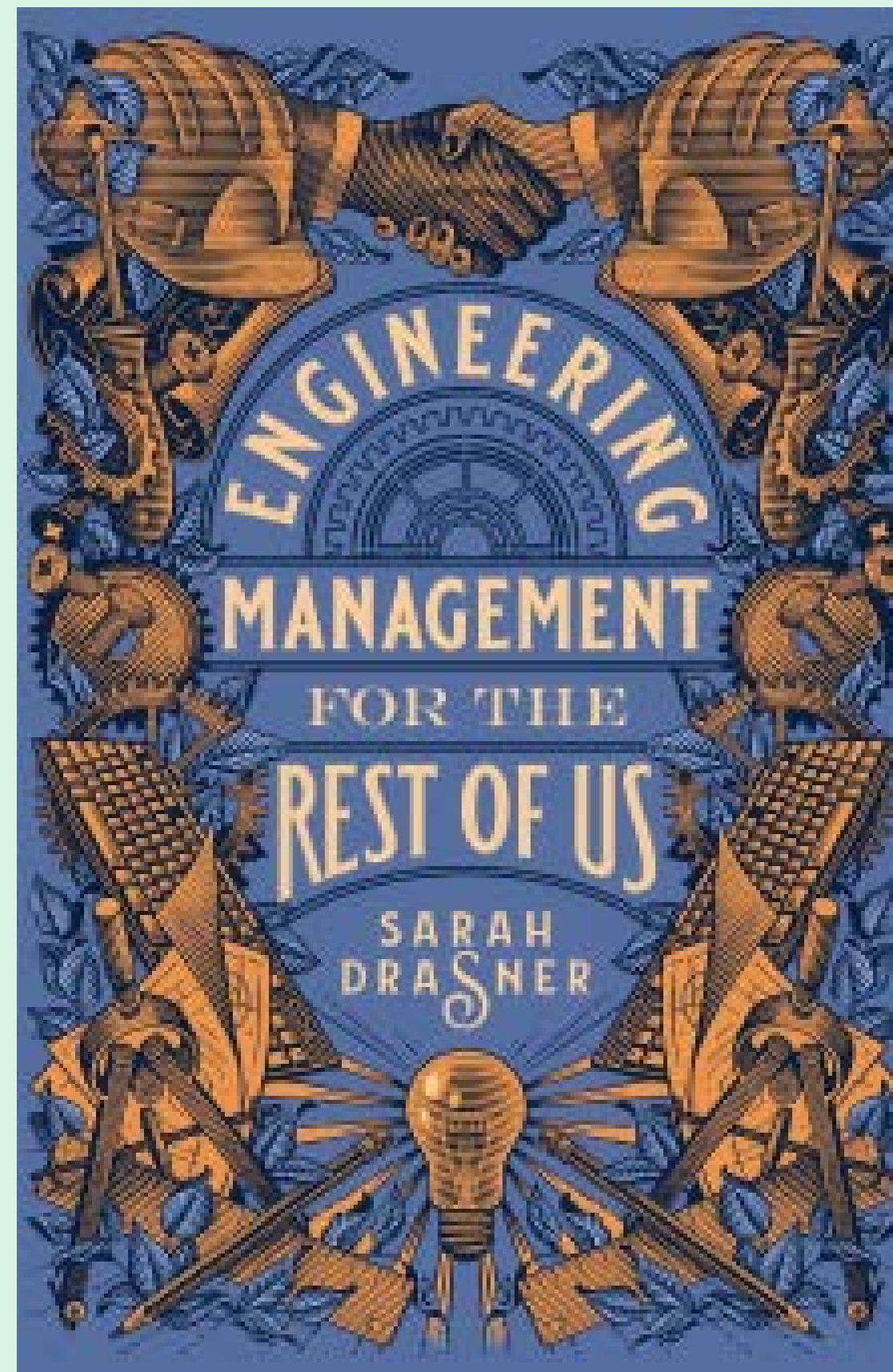
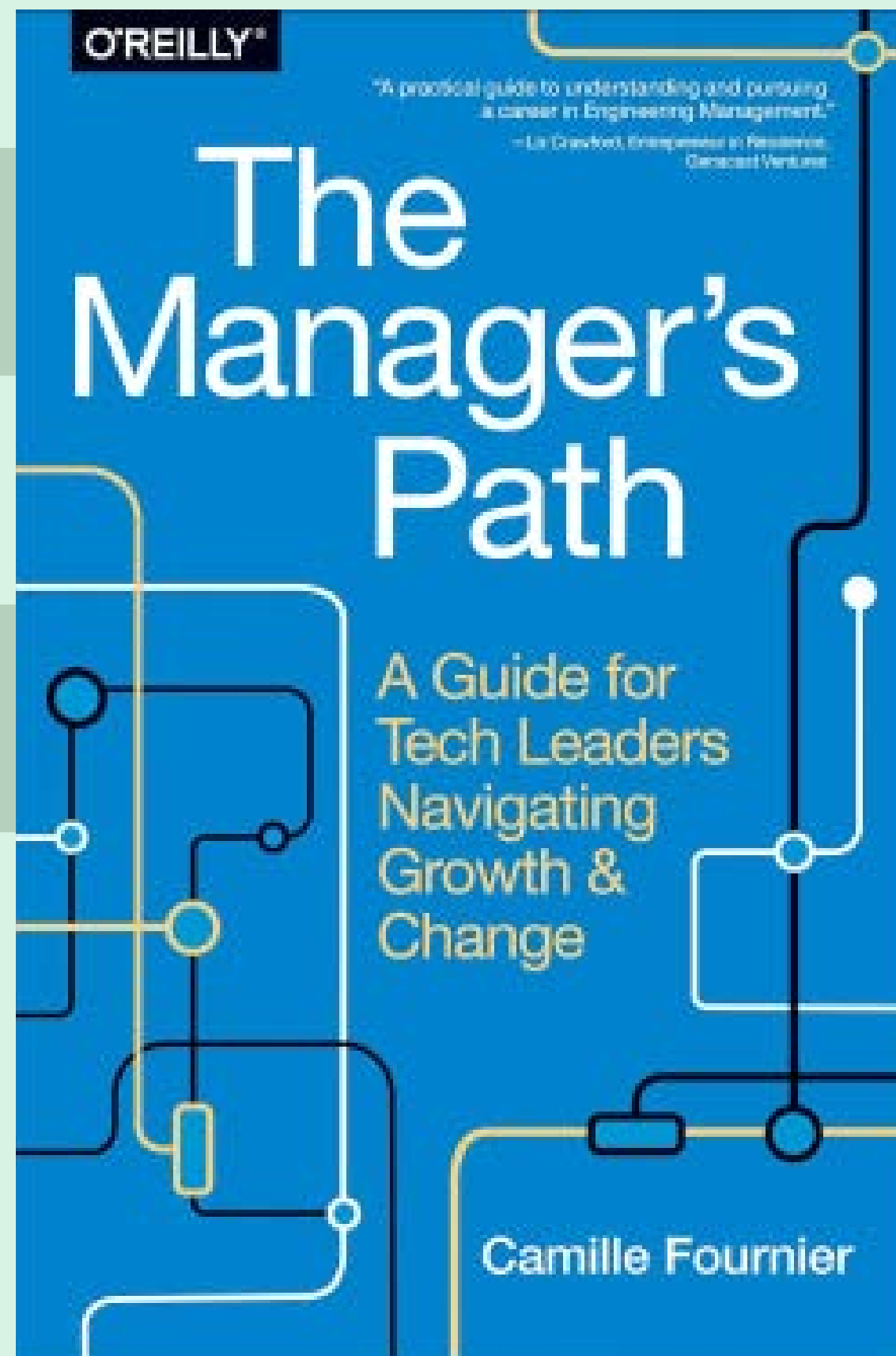
As a developer...

- You can visually tell if a bug is fixed
- You get an immediate notification whether your deployment succeeded or had an error
- Your tests clearly pass or fail
- You can build a feature based on requirements and cross each part off a list as you complete it

As a manager...

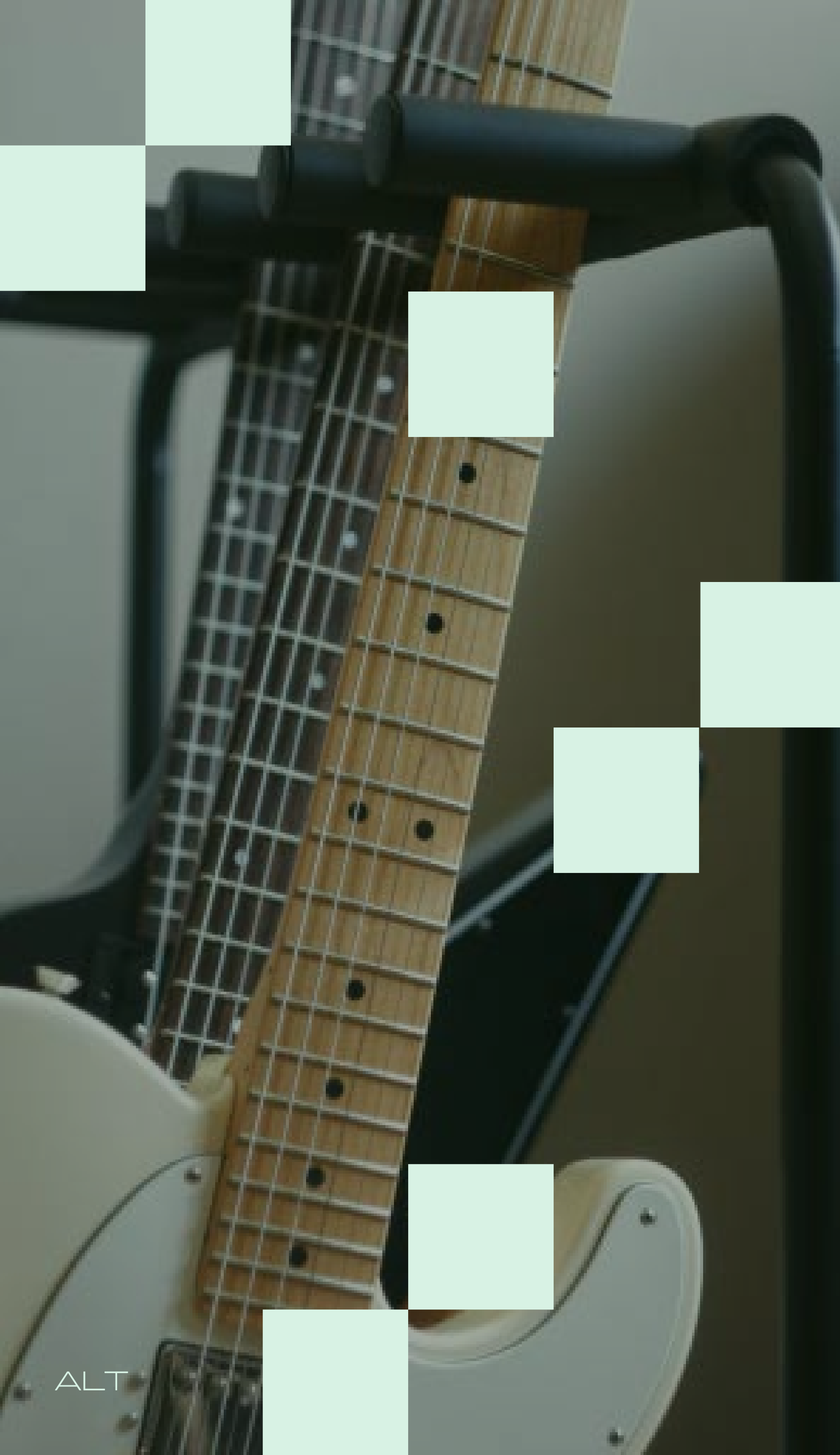
- You deliver feedback, but it takes a while to tell whether it had the intended effect
- You set long-term strategies that may take months or years to play out
- Your work has a gradual impact on the careers of your team members
- Part of your job is relationship-building, which is a to-do with no end date

Recommended reading



Giving feedback

- Avoid ruinous empathy—being kind isn't always the same as being nice!
- Praise in public, criticize in private
- Know when feedback will be well-received; use retros and other follow-ups to address feedback from emergency situations
- Don't wait to give feedback until an annual review!
- Ensure clear communication and shared understanding when setting expectations; consider multimodal feedback
- Celebrate the team's wins too!
- Continual relationship-building builds trust, and in turn, produces results



Managing performance

- W. Edwards Deming: 85% of issues are the results of systems; only 15% are from people
- Not everyone wants to be a rockstar or a manager—and that's OK! Find ways for them to succeed and grow that fit their wants and needs as well
- Clear, continuous feedback is key, and set very clear expectations (what needs to change, by when, how you'll gauge improvement)
- Avoid ruinous empathy: you punish your high performers by not managing your low performers—have the tough conversations

Getting feedback

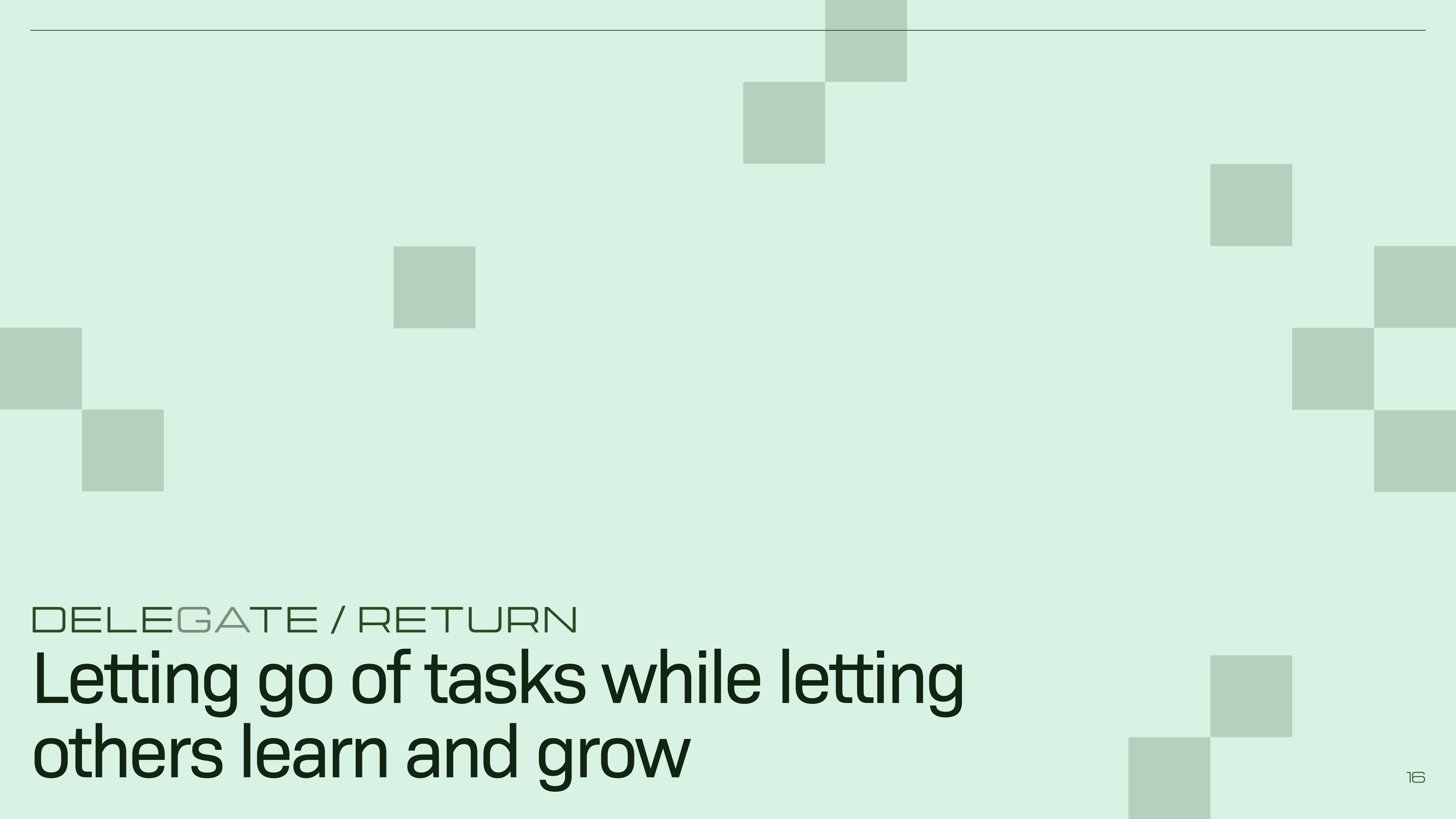
- Feedback is a gift when you receive it too!
- Build psychological safety by soliciting feedback regularly
- Context is helpful, even when you disagree with someone's feedback
- Manage up and sideways (with other managers) when needed

Team health indicators:
First Alert & Final Warning

Hiring and building team culture

- Build a team around sharing knowledge and learning from one another, rather than ego
- When hiring, think about what candidates can add to the team, and how they meet your values, rather than only looking for culture fit
- Involve your team in hiring processes—it's their team too—and give them context on what you're hoping to find in a candidate
- Use conferences as a way to bring remote teammates together if a full-team event isn't possible



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DELEGATE / RETURN

Letting go of tasks while letting
others learn and grow

CliftonStrengths

Your CliftonStrengths 34 Results

You are uniquely powerful. Your distinct CliftonStrengths 34 profile sets you apart from everyone else. This is your talent DNA, shown in rank order based on your responses to the assessment.

Use this report to make the most of your strongest CliftonStrengths themes, navigate the rest and maximize your infinite potential.

- **Read and reflect on your results** to understand what you naturally do best.
- **Learn how to apply** your strongest CliftonStrengths every day.
- **Share your results with others** to create stronger relationships and improve teamwork.



STRENGTHEN

- 1. Achiever
- 2. Learner
- 3. Input
- 4. Restorative
- 5. Discipline
- 6. Intellection
- 7. Responsibility
- 8. Arranger
- 9. Strategic
- 10. Relator

NAVIGATE

- 11. Focus
- 12. Individualization
- 13. Analytical
- 14. Context
- 15. Futuristic
- 16. Significance
- 17. Positivity
- 18. Connectedness
- 19. Harmony
- 20. Competition
- 21. Self-Assurance
- 22. Deliberative
- 23. Consistency
- 24. Developer
- 25. Includer
- 26. Woo
- 27. Communication
- 28. Activator
- 29. Belief
- 30. Empathy
- 31. Maximizer
- 32. Adaptability
- 33. Command
- 34. Ideation

You lead with **Executing** CliftonStrengths themes.

EXECUTING themes help you make things happen.

INFLUENCING themes help you take charge, speak up and make sure others are heard.

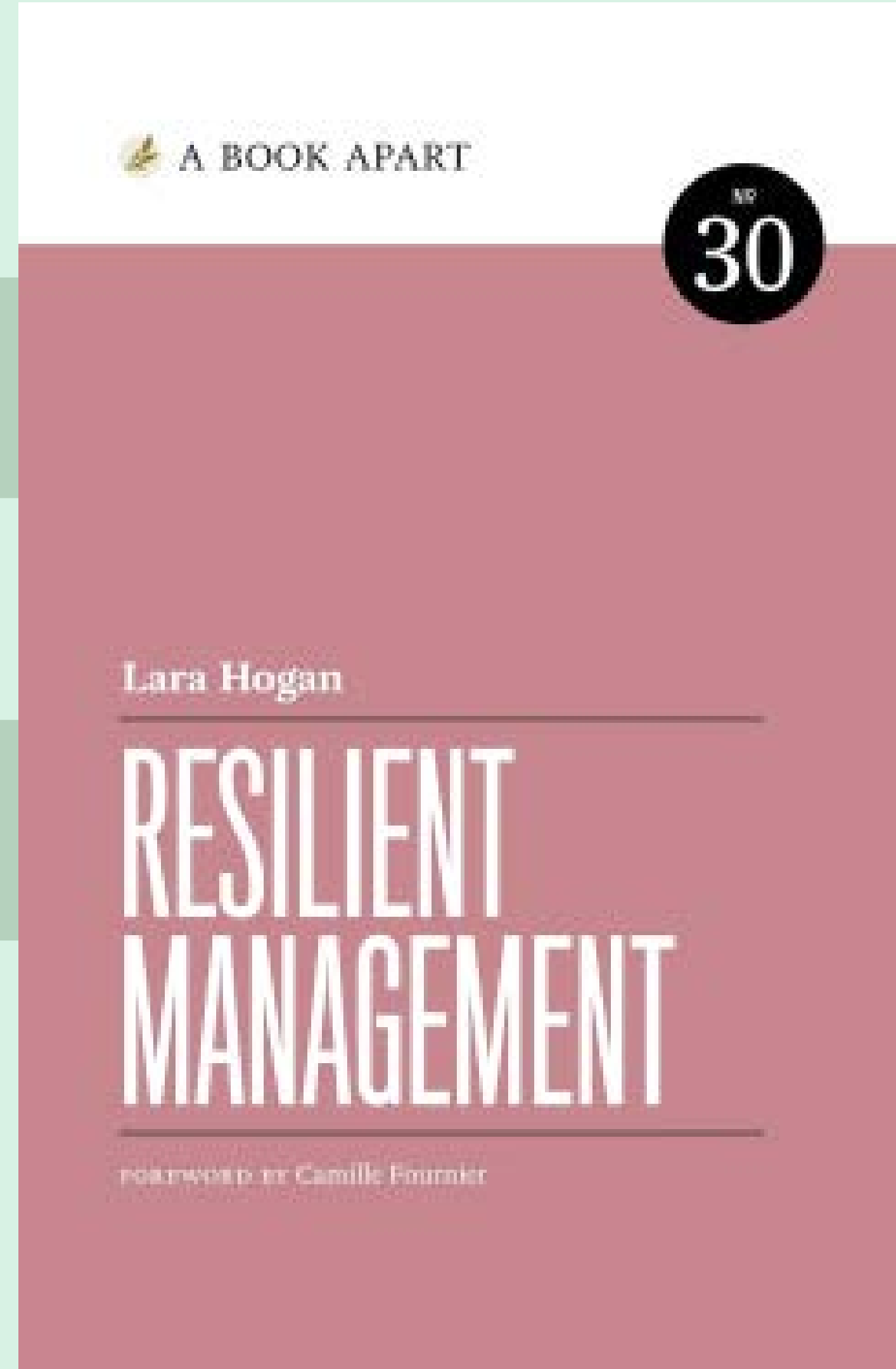
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING themes help you build strong relationships that hold a team together.

STRATEGIC THINKING themes help you absorb and analyze information that informs better decisions.

READ "IDENTIFY YOUR UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION: THE CLIFTONSTRENGTHS DOMAINS" SECTION TO LEARN MORE >

Delegation strategies

- Don't hand off a task to someone else and wash your hands of it
- Communicate and give context about the reason the task is being given
- Hand off tasks you've mastered and routine maintenance tasks as opportunities for others to learn
- Avoid “reverse delegation,” where an unsolved problem comes back to you—use it as an opportunity for coaching
- Protect your time for tasks that you are uniquely qualified to solve



“...The best gift you can give your teammates is a messy, hard-to-measure, unscoped project. This kind of project creates the biggest opportunity for someone to grow as a leader.”

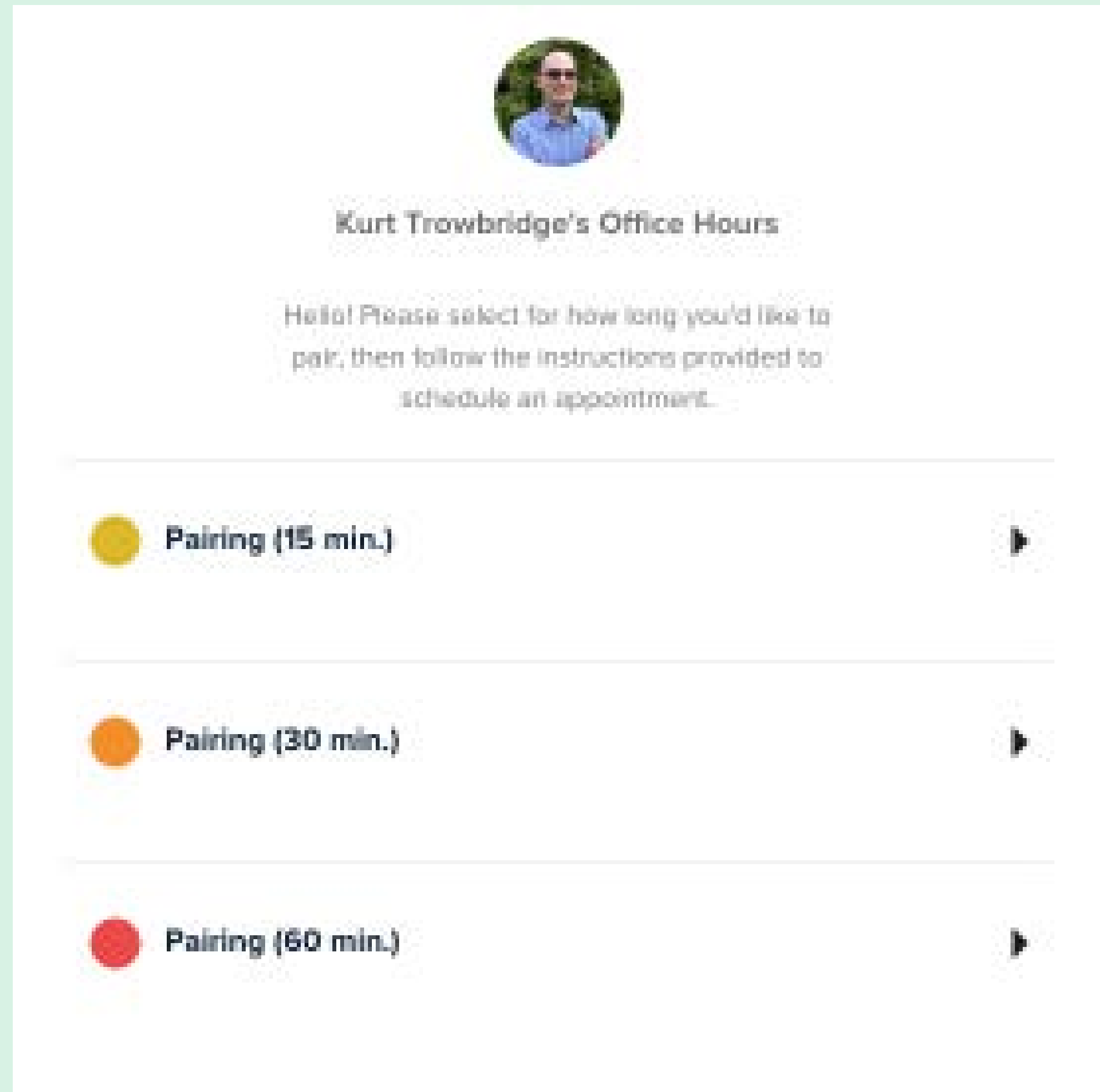
— Lara Hogan, *Resilient Management*

“You must try, then you must ask.”

— Matt Ringel



Coaching: manager as multiplier



A screenshot of a web interface for booking office hours. At the top is a circular profile picture of a man with glasses and a blue shirt. Below it, the text reads "Kurt Trowbridge's Office Hours". Underneath that is a message: "Hello! Please select for how long you'd like to pair, then follow the instructions provided to schedule an appointment." Below this message are three horizontal buttons, each with a colored circle and a right-pointing arrow. The first button has a yellow circle and says "Pairing (15 min.)". The second button has an orange circle and says "Pairing (30 min.)". The third button has a red circle and says "Pairing (60 min.)".



Tips:

- Let your team member lead with what they've tried beforehand
- Ask more questions than you give directions
- Make sure the meeting ends with clear next steps
- Make "better writers, not better writing"

Different types of delegation



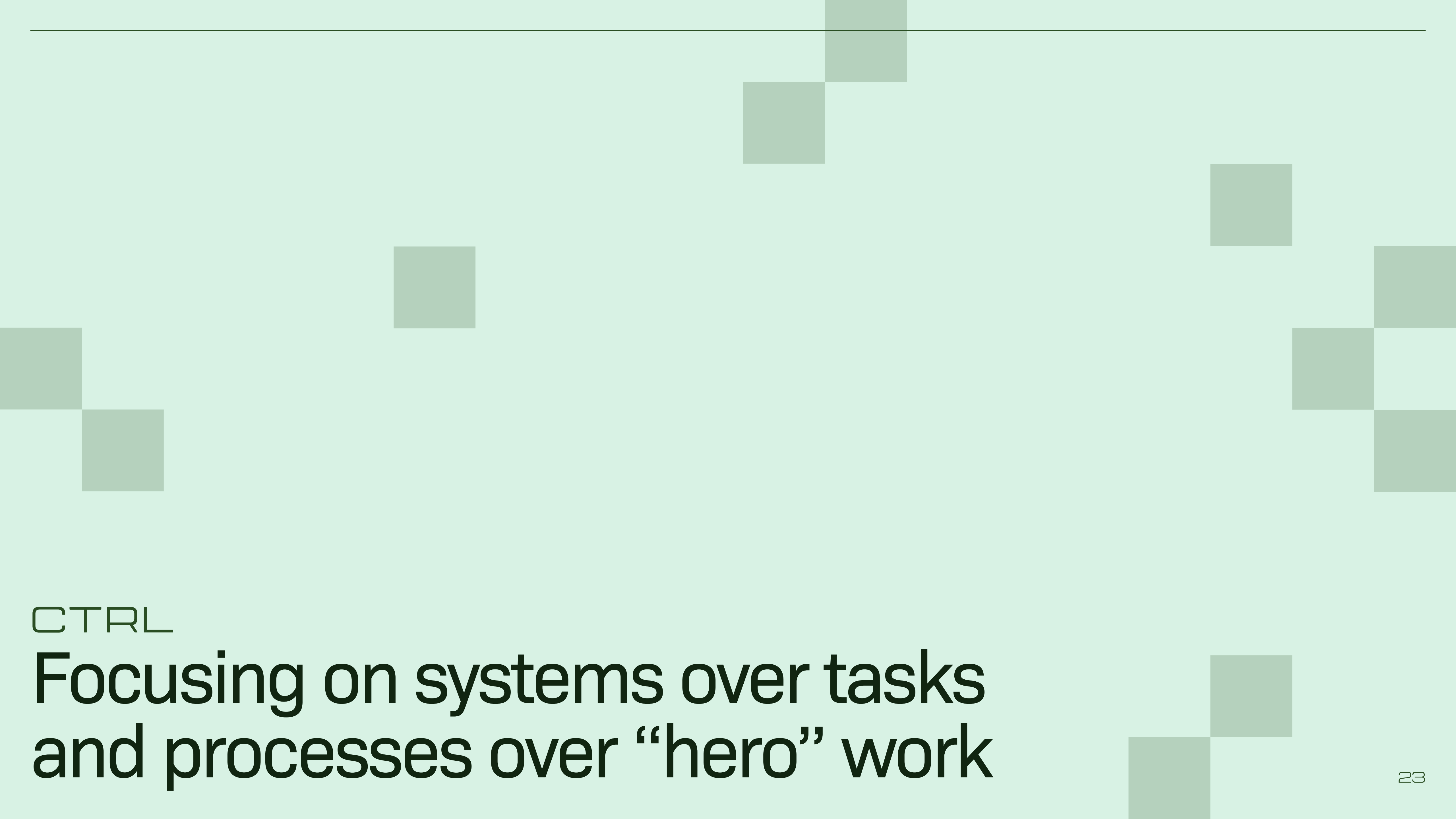
Mentoring



Coaching



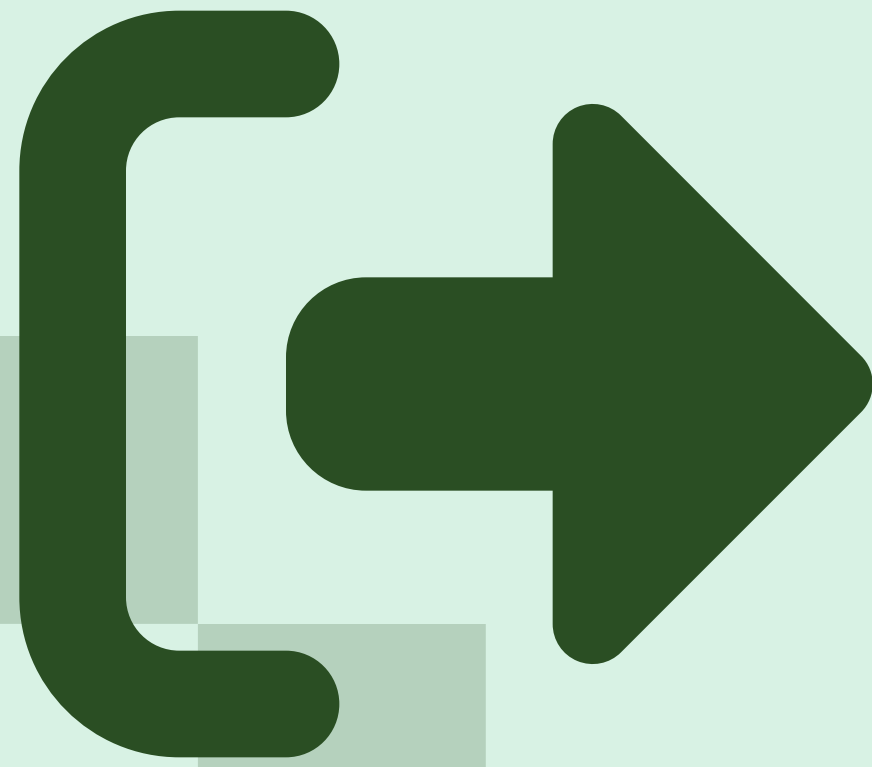
Sponsoring

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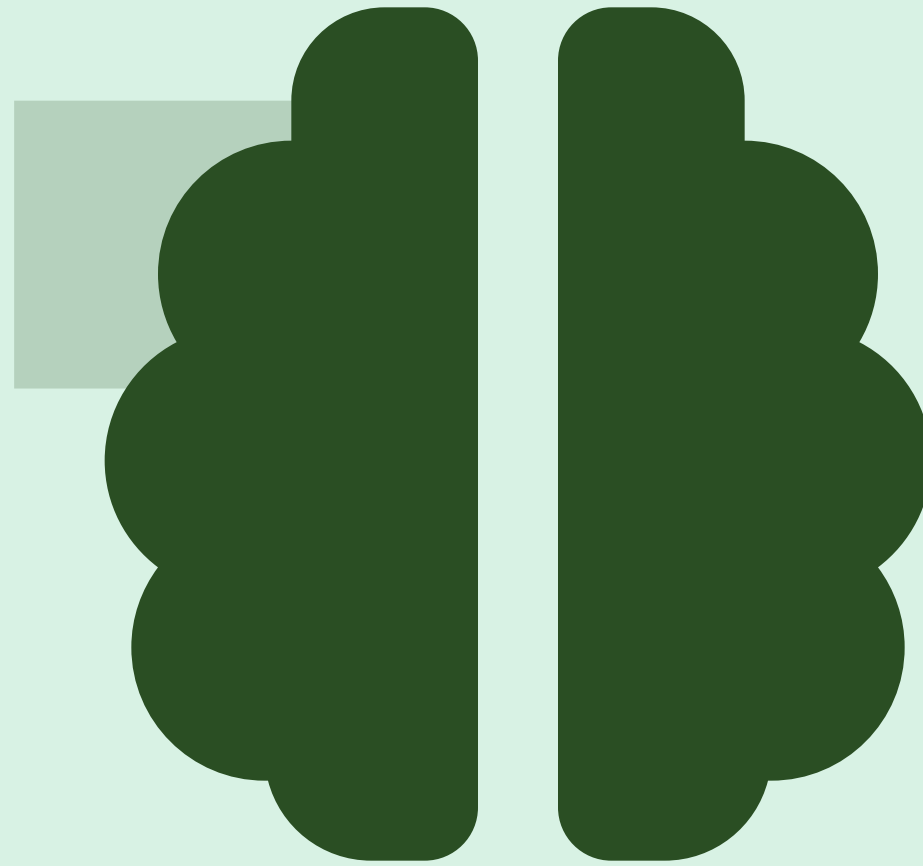
CTRL

Focusing on systems over tasks
and processes over “hero” work

Things you can't control



Outputs



Emotions



Opinions



Fires

Processes & systems

GravityWorks / Projects / Trailhead

Repositories

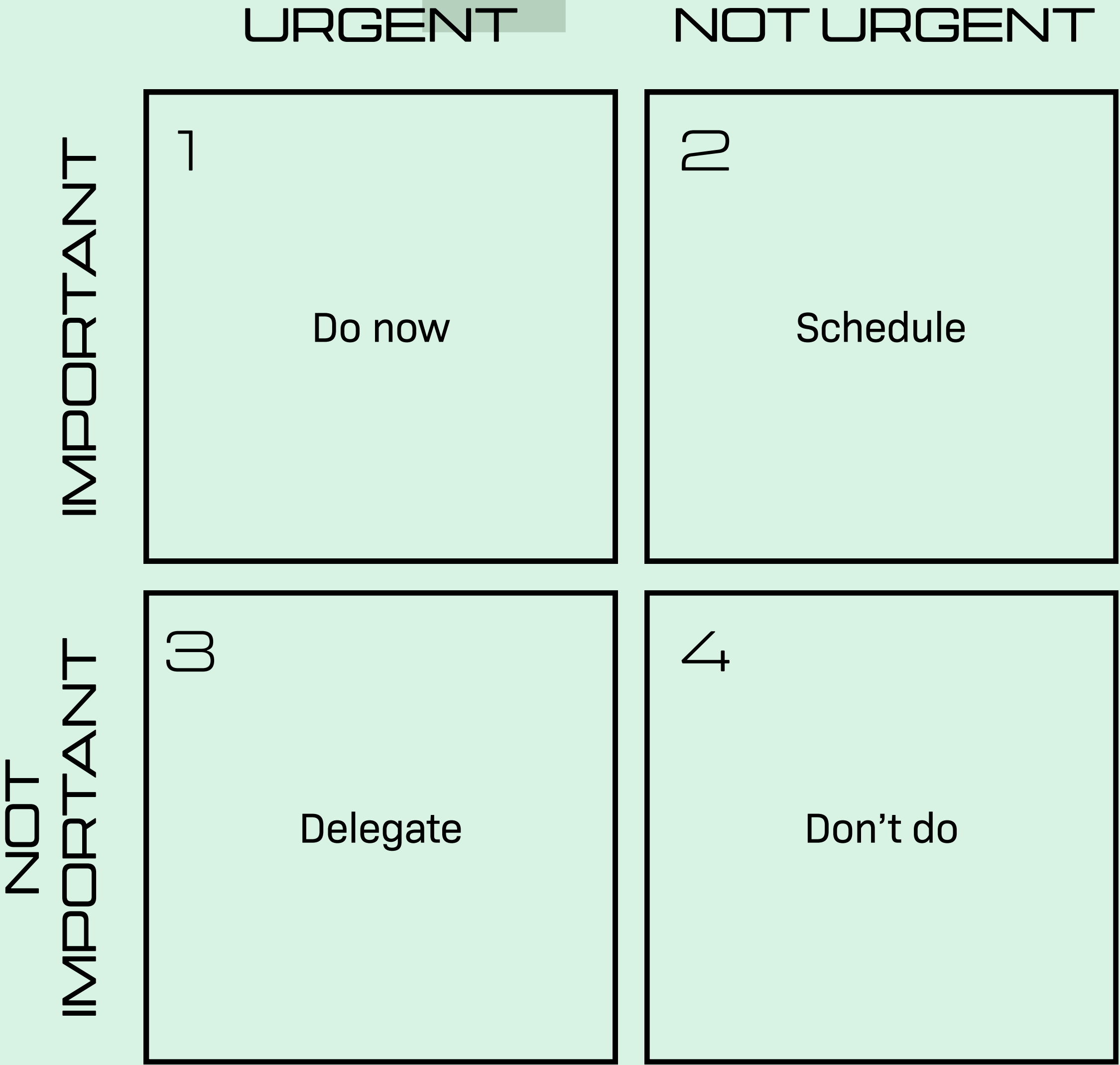
Add repositories

Name	Size ▾	Last updated ▾	Builds
 Trailhead: Startup Script	32.4 KB	4 days ago	
 Trailhead: Media	36.5 KB	2026-03-26	
 Trailhead: View	9.1 KB	2026-03-26	
 Trailhead: Text	7.7 KB	2026-03-26	
 Trailhead: Testimonial	11.2 KB	2026-03-26	
 Trailhead: Section	10.7 KB	2026-03-26	
 Trailhead: Number Block	9 KB	2026-03-26	
 Trailhead: Newsletter Signup	8.2 KB	2026-03-26	
 Trailhead: Image Grid	11.8 KB	2026-03-26	
 Trailhead: Icon List	16.9 KB	2026-03-26	
 Trailhead: Icon Blocks	11.8 KB	2026-03-26	
 Trailhead: Hero	12.6 KB	2026-03-26	
 Trailhead: Checkerboard Row	9.4 KB	2026-03-26	

Development task planning

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Feature	Task name	Description/Notes	Base estimate	Confidence	Maximum estimate
42	Alerts	Style/template Alerts		0.50	Very High	0.625
43	Alerts	Enable scheduling for alerts		0.25	Very High	0.3125
44	News	Update News content type fields	- add academic year field	0.50	Very High	0.625
45	News	News Categories taxonomy	- add icon field - add sport icon field (references sports taxonomy)	0.25	Very High	0.3125
46	News	Enable scheduling for news		0.25	Very High	0.3125
47	News	View: Top Stories	- sort: hand selected but if there none, show recent	1.00	Very High	1.25
48	News	Entityqueue: Top Stories	- up to 4 articles	0.25	Very High	0.3125
49	News	View: News & Annoucements (search)	- uses infinite scroll	0.75	Very High	0.9375
50	News	View: Recent	- most recent 4 stories (any tag/all stories)	0.50	Very High	0.625
51	News	View: Related	- pre-filtered by sport/tag	0.75	Very High	0.9375
52	News	View: Sports News	- pre-filtered by sport	0.50	Very High	0.625
53	Sponsors	Install SimpleAds	https://www.drupal.org/project/simpleads	0.25	Very High	0.3125
54	Sponsors	Configure ads	- set responsive breakpoints - add tags field (field_ad_tags) to advertisements (multiselect) and all content types that can host an ad (select one) — ads should be placed on all pages for the sport — the same ad can be displayed in multiple locations - in the block, set reference fields to the ad tags - they will use responsive images - only content admin should be able to create ads - things to fix: caching ad tags on node when updated, transition time (add field to set how often ad should rotate)	3.00	Medium	7.5

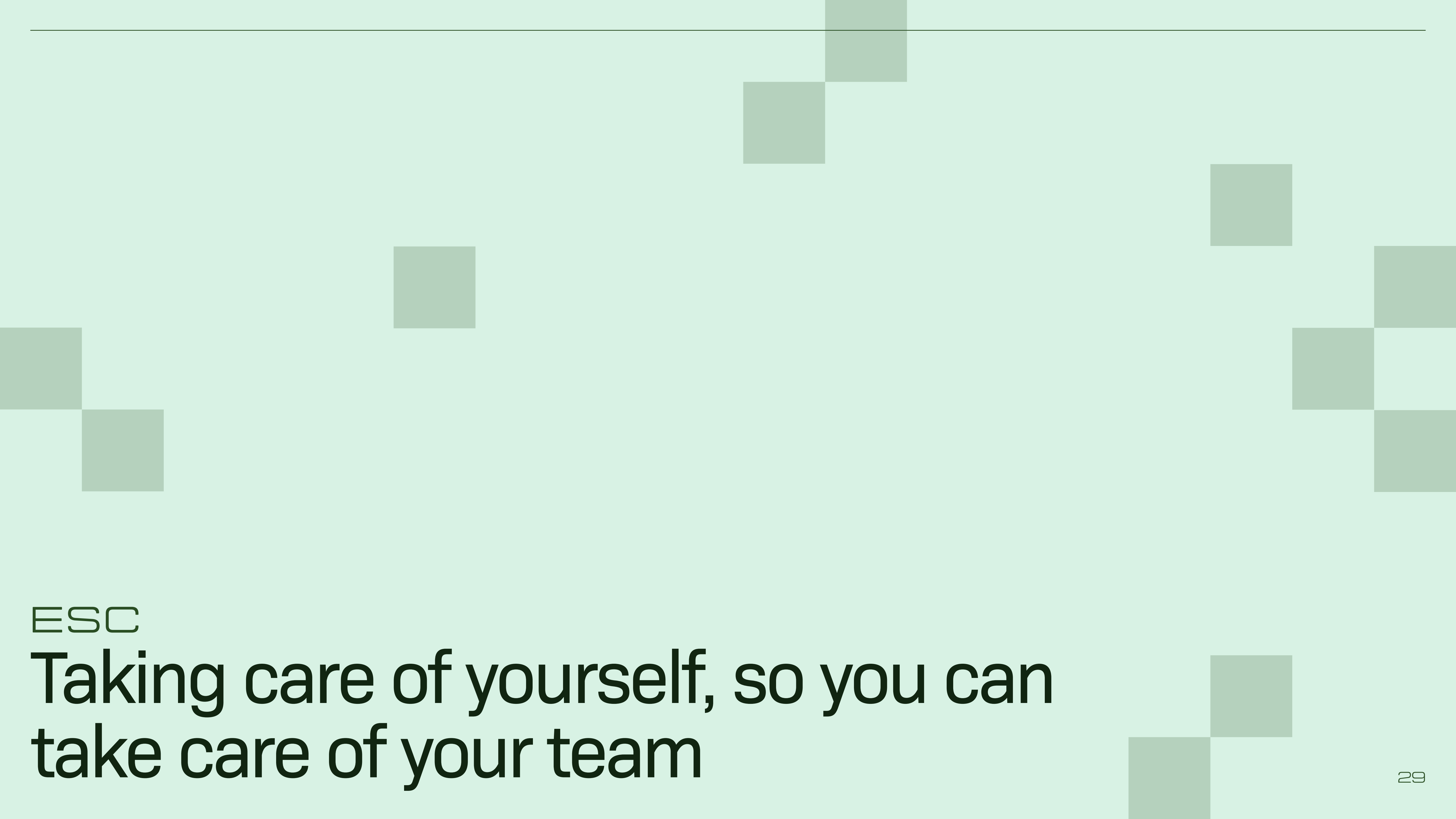
Eisenhower Matrix



Maker vs. manager time

Be intentional about how you manage your time:

- Block time for project work you need to complete yourself—but keep that as minimal as possible
- Block time for professional development, in order to protect it
- Document routine processes and tasks that can be delegated; share information multimodally as much as possible
- Hold 1:1s and other recurring check-ins; respect team's time and needs by rescheduling instead of canceling where possible
- Leave slack in your schedule for unplanned team needs

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ESC

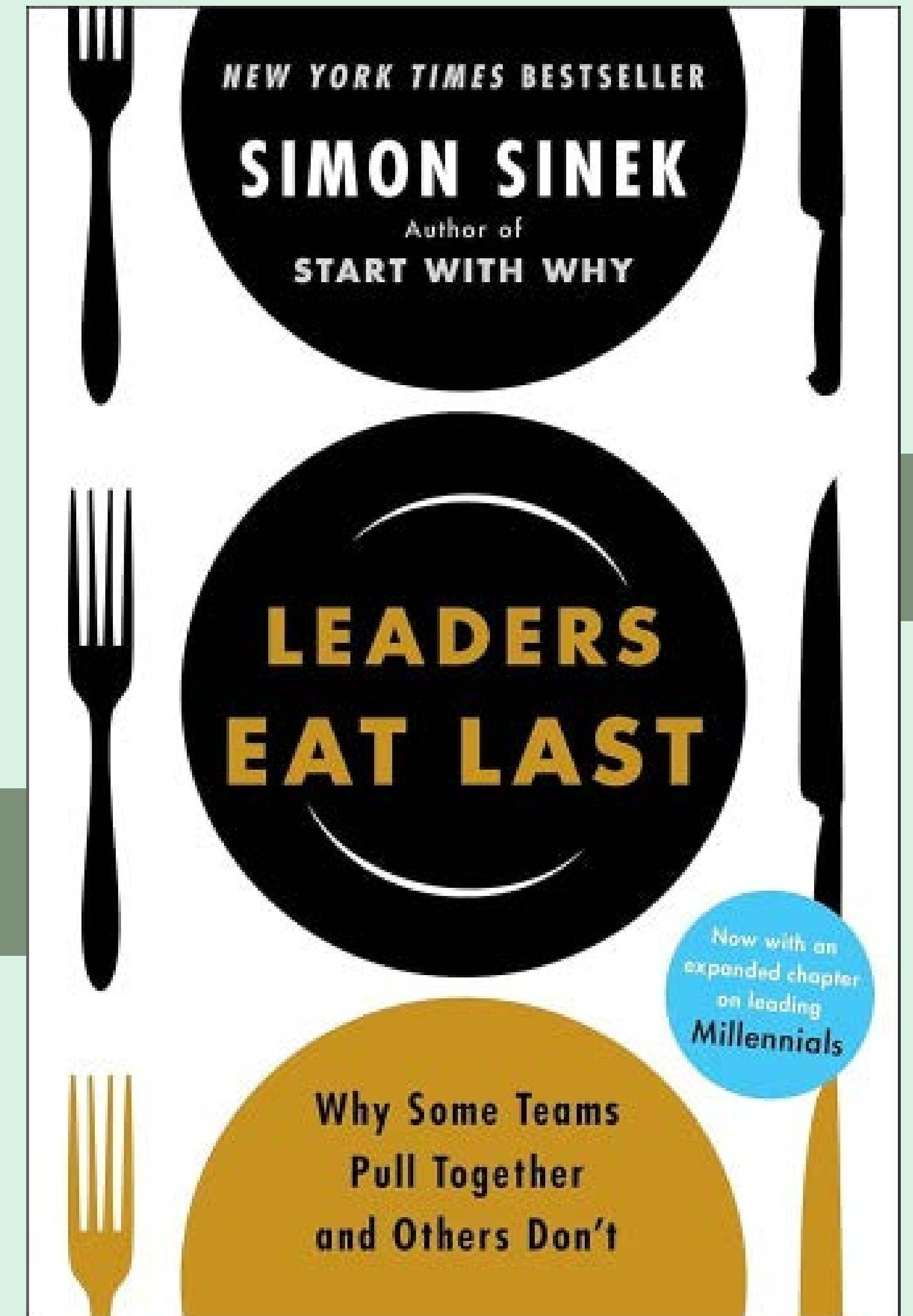
Taking care of yourself, so you can
take care of your team



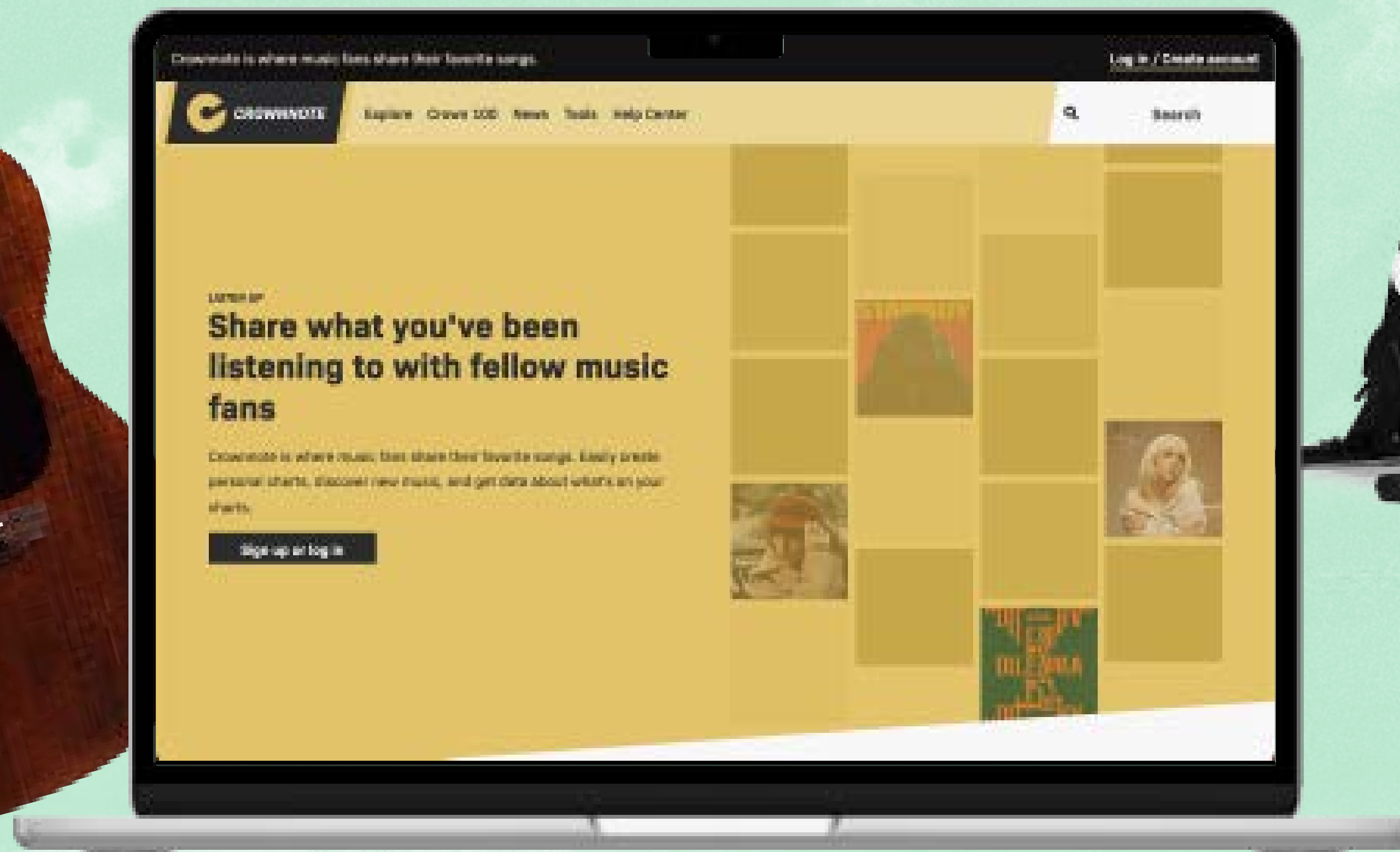
Consulting work is like
drinking from a firehose.

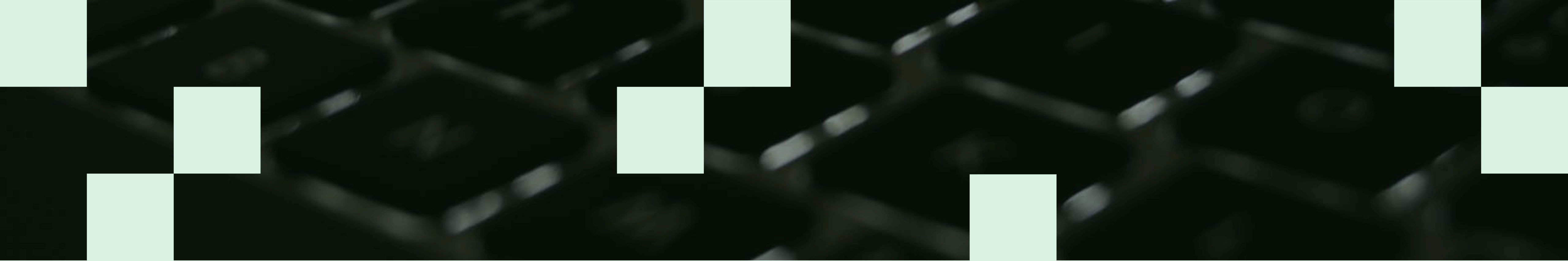
“Leaders Eat Last, but starving leaders don’t make great decisions.”

— Bree Benesh









01 Understand the role change

02 Learn to delegate and trust your team

03 Build systems for oversight, without micromanagement

04 Sustain yourself, then support your team

END

Thank you!



Kurt Trowbridge



GravityWorksDesign.com